DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 336 670 CG 023 644

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TITLE Teaching Collegiate AIDS Prevention Programs: A State-wide Training Workshop.
PUB DATE Mar 91
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American College Personnel Association (Atlanta, GA, March 15-20, 1991).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome; *College Faculty; College Students; Higher Education; *Prevention; *Professional Development; *Sexuality; *Student Personnel Services

ABSTRACT

Teaching Collegiate AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) Prevention Programs (TCAPP) is a 3-day education workshop which educates and trains student development professionals, college faculty, other university personnel, and students on how to provide HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)/AIDS education. The workshop, held annually since 1988, is funded through a grant from the Ohio Department of Health and through participant registration fees. A workshop such as TCAPP is important because student development professionals and other educators need to be able to provide nonjudgmental care and services to students with HIV disease. The goals and objectives of the workshop are to: (1) prepare college faculty/staff and students to teach about HIV/AIDS; (2) develop a level of comfort with the topic of human sexuality so that the participants could be more effective in discussing and teaching sexually explicit information; (3) present options for teaching safer sex; (4) present methods to address sexual abstinence; (5) present content material for an HIV/AIDS course or program; (6) distribute current HIV/AIDS education resources; and (7) distribute a workshop participant directory to promote networking. Workshop participants (N=88) for the last 2 years completed a knowledge and attitude test about HIV/AIDS. The survey results indicated knowledge level was high and attitudes were positive. (ABL)

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Teaching Collegiate AIDS Prevention Programs: A State-wide Training Workshop

(Manuscript Category: On the Campus)

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Teaching Collegiate AIDS Prevention Programs: A State-wide Training Workshop

Teaching Collegiate AIDS Prevention Programs (TCAPP) is an award winning three day HIV/AIDS education workshop which educates and trains student development professionals, college faculty, other university personnel, and students on how to provide effective HIV/AIDS education. The workshop, held annually each summer since 1988, is funded through a grant from the Ohio Department of Health and through participant registration fees. TCAPP has educated nearly 125 participants from over 50 institutions including participants from five states. In the fall of 1989, the National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA) Region IV Awards Committee selected TCAPP for a creative program award.

A workshop such as TCAPP is important, because student development professionals and other educators need to be able to provide nonjudgemental care and services to students with HIV disease. However, the literature documents studies which indicate the unwillingness of some educators and health care providers to care for these individuals (Kelly, et al., 1987 and Wertz et al., 1987). Student development professionals also need to provide accurate information and counseling to students regarding HIV infection and AIDS. Kerr and her colleagues (1988/1989) surveyed selected members of a national health association and found some misinformation regarding knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Respondents also indicated they were most uncomfortable discussing the topics of homosexuality and bisexuality and death and dying. TCAPP addressed some of the misconceptions educators on the college campus may have had regarding these topics and HIV/AIDS, and helped them to develop a level of comfort in order to be effective HIV/AIDS educators.

Goals and Objectives

The content of the workshop sessions was based in part on the needs of educators documented in the literature. Specifically, the goals and objectives of the workshop were to:

(1) prepare college faculty/staff and students to teach about HIV/AIDS on college campuses;

(2) develop a level of comfort with the topic of human sexuality so the participants could be more effective in discussing and teaching sexually explicit information;

(3) present options for teaching safer sex to college students who choose to be sexually active;

(4) present methods to address sexual abstinence for college students who choose not to be sexually active;

(5) present content material for an HIV/AIDS credit course or general HIV/AIDS program;

(6) distribute current HIV/AIDS education resources to the participants and

(7) distribute a workshop participant directory to promote networking.

Continuing education units (CEUs) were also made available to qualifying participants.

Workshop Format

Educators were given the opportunity through experiential exercises to address their own knowledge of and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS so they may effectively address those of their students. Misinformation about HIV/AIDS and discomfort with topics related to this issue can negatively impact the effectiveness of education for students (Fennell & Beyrer, 1989). TCAPP addressed sensitive topics in a manner which helped participants discuss issues which were uncomfortable for them and helped them begin to work through issues which may have prevented them from being effective as educators.

TCAPP used seminars with interactive discussions and small group sessions which allowed participants to practice methods to teach college students about safer sex and other

topics. Thus, TCAPP enabled learners to benefit from active participation in the teaching and learning process and affords participants the opportunity to practice the skills they were learning.

The following are some of the methods and activities used to achieve the workshop goals. First, a visualization exercise was used with participants to enable them to explore what it would feel like to be diagnosed with HIV disease. Second, a panel of four people living with HIV disease, including a woman and an African American, was used to foster understanding about the human side of AIDS. The panel included individuals who were heterosexual and homosexual to emphasize that everyone is at risk for HIV disease. Time was allotted for participants to talk informally with the panelists. Third, interactive experiential exercises were used to increase comfort levels to become effective HIV/AIDS educators and to explore feelings about homosexuality and death and dying.

Specific workshop sessions included the following: AIDS: Putting the Disease in Perspective (epidemiology), Religion and AIDS, Legal Issues, Blood Related Issues, HIV Testing and Counseling, Developing a Level of Comfort to Discuss HIV/AIDS and Sexuality, Sexual Abstinence, Essentials of HIV/AIDS Education for Time-Limited Programs, Resources for the College Level, Minorities and AIDS, and a Panel of People with AIDS. Speakers for the workshop were selected based on their expertise on the topic of HIV/AIDS. Selection of speakers was critical to the success of the program. Speakers with incorrect knowledge and/or negative attitudes about the topic should be avoided. Most sessions were 50 minutes with time allotted for questions and answers.

In addition to speakers, films and videos appropriate to college students were shown. A resource room containing books, pamphlets, audiotapes and videotapes was open to participants on one day of the workshop with time given to peruse the resource room. Participants were also provided with an extensive packet of resource materials.

Evaluation

In addition to completing a demographic form, participants at the workshop the last two years have completed a 36-item knowledge and 40-item attitude pretest on HIV/AIDS. For the two years combined, 88 surveys were returned (20 males and 68 females). The majority of the participants, 57.8% (48) were in Student Affairs, with 16.9% (14) in Academic Affairs, and the remaining in administration, community agencies, other, or did not indicate a professional area. The level of knowledge was high on the knowledge test. There was only one question that participants had difficulty answering correctly. Many participants (54.5%) incorrectly identified the antibody test for exposure to HIV as an "AIDS test". Attitudes towards issues related to HIV/AIDS were also positive. This high level of knowledge and positive attitudes towards HIV/AIDS may be a function of many variables including the fact that 64.8% (57) of the participants indicated that they had had previous instruction about HIV/AIDS. Additionally, individuals self-selected to attend the workshop.

Only 51.1% indicated that their campus/organization had adequate resources to help plan HIV/AIDS education programs with the remaining indicating either "No" (31.8%) or "Does not apply" (17%). Participants did indicate a need for HIV/AIDS resources lists to identify: film/video (70.1%), books (79.5%), pamphlets (81.8%), and scientific journal articles (77.3%). There was also a need for criteria to evaluate HIV/AIDS curricula (80.2%) and for inservice programs on college campuses (61.4%).

Conclusion

In the state of Ohio where the workshop is held, there are 170 public, private and specialized colleges and universities (State Board of Regents, 1988). These institutions educate approximately one-half million students each year. Therefore, TCAPP provided an excellent training opportunity for college faculty, staff, and students so that they can better meet the HIV/AIDS education and prevention needs on their campuses. TCAPP provided a

workshop which prepared individuals to design, implement and evaluate HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs on college campuses. Programs on HIV/AIDS education and prevention are particularly needed when consideration is given to the amount of sexual experimentation which occurs during the college years and the long incubation period of the virus, HIV. Until a cure is found for this syndrome, workshops which provide this type of training will be needed for educators. Thus, replication of the TCAPP workshop by individuals in other states is strongly encouraged. Interested individuals are encouraged to contact the authors for additional information.

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